



American Rescue Plan Act Cybersecurity Program

Application Guidelines

Governor Greg Gianforte

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DESCRIPTION OF THE CYBERSECURITY PROGRAM

The goal of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Cybersecurity Program is to provide much needed awareness regarding the threat of cybersecurity as well as monitoring, security, and training to protect Montana’s small and medium sized business from cybersecurity attacks. Cyber-attacks on all businesses, but particularly small to medium sized businesses are becoming more frequent, targeted, and complex. This program would provide funds to assist businesses with cybersecurity monitoring and security. The Department has allocated approximately \$2 million towards this program.

Businesses can receive up to \$8,000 in grant funds for reimbursement of newly implemented cybersecurity measures paid to an accredited Montana Cybersecurity Company for monitoring and security equipment and/or programs.

DEFINITIONS:

Accredited Montana Cybersecurity Company: A Montana based Managed Service Provider (MSP,) IT or security company with a combination of education, certification, training, and experiential and continuous learning attributes required to implement cybersecurity measures effectively. Common certifications can be found here: <https://niccs.cisa.gov/about-niccs/cybersecurity-certifications>

Eligible Activities: Eligible cybersecurity measures include the following: security services, network security equipment, consumer security software, data security, cloud security, infrastructure protection, identity access management, real time threat response, integrated risk management, application security and training. Cyber Insurance is NOT eligible. Cost must have been incurred after November 15, 2022.

Eligible Business: The business must be registered and in good standing with the Montana Secretary of State or Tribal Government and/or is a sole proprietorship. The business must have at least 5 but no more than 50 employees. The Business must also have been in business for more than one year and may not be a hobby business. The business cannot have implemented any previous cybersecurity measures, except for the standard anti-virus software.

Hobby Business: Any activity that a person pursues because they enjoy it and with no intention of making a profit.

Performance Metrics: Boost community awareness of cybersecurity and increase number of Montana small/medium businesses taking adequate cybersecurity measures for the first time. Get 300 unique small/medium businesses to invest in cybersecurity. A survey will be sent to applicants 6 months after the funding ends with questions about effectiveness of measures taken.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible business would apply directly to the program. Applications are only accepted on <https://www.covidreliefmt.org/submit>

Businesses are excluded from receiving funds if they are on the federal or state debarment lists or engaging in a business activity that is federally excluded like cannabis.

GRANT CEILING AND THRESHOLDS

Reimbursements are for businesses that have not implemented cybersecurity measures in the past except for antivirus software.

The Department ultimately determines the size of the grant and reserves the right to recommend a reduced amount.

Businesses can only apply for one grant from the program, but the one submission can include multiple eligible activity invoices up \$8000 threshold

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Eligible business would need to engage with Montana based Managed Service Provider (MSP,) IT or security company with a combination of education, certification, training, and experiential and continuous learning attributes for the implementation of eligible activities. Many of these activities are considered cybersecurity hygiene but can also include the purchase of equipment for the implementation of the cybersecurity measures.

The costs must have been incurred after **November 15, 2022.**

GRANT APPLICATION SUBMITTAL PROCESS

The Montana Department of Commerce is the primary point of contact for initiating the application.

The eligible business will need to implement and pay for the cybersecurity measures. Once they complete the measures, the eligible business can submit an application to the Department of Commerce for reimbursement.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION SUBMITTAL

Applications will be accepted on a first come – first serve basis until all funds have been obligated.

MANAGEMENT OF FUNDS

The eligible business must have implemented and paid for the cybersecurity measures. They are eligible to submit one request, up to \$8,000, for reimbursement. Once the expenses are verified and contract has been executed, the funds are transferred via Electronic Funds Transfer to the business.

At the end of the calendar year, the State will issue 1099 for funds disbursed.